

ANNUAL REPORT



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Note from Head of Haiti Operations

Due to the global pandemic, this year people across the globe have experienced the emotional challenges and solitude of being unable to physically connect with their families and friends. Now imagine the life of a child separated from his or her family - removed completely from their community - to live in an orphanage. Can you imagine the damage this separation causes to the child's emotional and social development? No child should be removed from his or her family simply due to poverty.

By supporting efforts that strengthen families, build up communities, and empower vulnerable people to escape poverty - you can help prevent family separation. This is exactly what our team works to do.

The past year certainly came with challenges. 2019 ended with political unrest that led to national lock-down, the closure of schools, and a struggling economy. 2020 started with crippling inflation that left many families hungry, and a global pandemic that forced schools to close once again. While students stayed home due to COVID-19, their parents continued to work, and rates of sexual assault against young children increased.

The LFBS team adapted our programs in response to these challenges. We provided supplies and training for COVID-19 prevention to vulnerable families. We continued supporting local child protection authorities in responding to emergency situations such as 7 year old sexual assault victims in need of medical care. We hired university students whom we support to work part time while their schools were closed, providing English tutoring to younger children and agronomy support to rural families.

An exciting result of our adaptation to these challenging circumstances is that we've finally taken the time to focus on internal development. As of April 2020 we began focusing on trainings and workshops with our local staff every week. We've made great progress in reinforcing our staff members' capacity while building them up to become more autonomous in their work. Our entire team is participating as we restructure our operations and look at ways to improve all that we do!

I'm very excited for the progress the upcoming year holds - both for those LFBS supports and for our own team! Thank you so much for making this possible!

Morgan Wienberg, M.S.C.

Co-founder/Head of Haiti Operations

Leadership

Morgan Wienberg

Co-founder/Head of Haiti Operations

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Child/Youth Mentor

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Boys' House Mother

Mauna

RN/Medical Coordinator

Medjune

Girls' House Mother

Mikerlange

Girls' House Mother

Nadege

Social Worker

Nadine

Secretary

Nicolas

Staff Manager

Ronald

Assistant to Director

Wattson

Expenditure Report Manager

Wilner

Driver

External Consultants

Enel

Child Protection Consultant

Fara

Child Protection Consultant

Wisly

*Engineer, Project Manager,
Land Development/Building*

2019–2020 Activity Highlights



“If someone wants to help Haiti, they should go through organizations working in Child Protection, and especially those that are promoting family preservation and reunification.”

— Nicolas, LFBS Staff Manager



142

Participants in our **business start-up program**



350

Families **holistically receiving support** from our programs in their **communities**



1000s

Beneficiaries worked with **since our conception**

1. REINFORCING LOCAL SOCIAL SERVICES (IBESR)

When COVID-19 reached Haiti and schools were subsequently closed, Haitian Social Services (IBESR) noticed increased rates of sexual assault cases against young children. LFBS played a key role in providing those victims with access to medical care, ensuring they had a safe place to go to, and following up to ensure they received psychological care.

LFBS has also provided twice weekly logistical support to IBESR for the documentation of orphanages located throughout Southern Haiti. The documentation of children in orphanages helps with the prevention of child trafficking,

the identification of neglectful or abusive orphanages, and the gathering of information that will potentially assist in future family reunification.

While visiting orphanages for documentation purposes, IBESR identified several orphanages that were severely neglectful in which the children needed to be removed immediately. LFBS was able to assist not only with the closure of these orphanages but also with the immediate relocation, medical care, nutritional support, family reunification and continued follow-up for those children who had been mistreated.



2. FOSTER FAMILY SUPPORT

The foster family system is relatively new to Haiti and is an important step towards deinstitutionalization – creating the possibility for children who cannot be reunited with their own families to be placed with caring families rather than in an institution.

The organization that had assisted Haitian Social Services (IBESR) in establishing a foster family system, recently left Haiti altogether. This left a huge gap in the child protection sector. LFBS has stepped up to help fill this gap by supporting foster families identified by IBESR in Southern Haiti. Examples of situations in which foster families have vital importance include when infants are abandoned without any trace of their families, or when a child's mother is in prison. When such placements occur, LFBS verifies that

the foster family is providing a caring environment, provides baby formula and other critical supplies, and ensures the child has access to medical care and an education.

In collaboration with IBESR, in June 2020 we were able to place a large number of children in emergency care foster families when they were being transitioned out of a neglectful and abusive orphanage. LFBS ensured immediate food and hygiene provisions and access to medical care.

Several foster family parents are participants in our business start-up program, including two long-term foster families for handicapped children. These children had been abandoned in the local hospital - but are now healthy and progressing developmentally within their new foster families!

3. OUTREACH TO YOUTH IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW

In fall of 2020 we hosted our 5th annual Street Child Meeting. This unique initiative aims to motivate youth living on the streets of Les Cayes to reunite with their families. The event involves providing these vulnerable youth with the opportunity to speak out about their personal situations, to engage in recreational games, to be documented by local authorities, to learn about children's rights – and to have a warm meal. Youth who formerly lived in the streets gave motivational speeches, describing how their lives have changed now that they're no longer in the streets, and encouraging the other youth to change their own lives. Their speeches moved staff and other youth to tears! Each year, this meeting results in several atTendees being motivated to return to their families, go to school, and reintegrate into their communities! Haitian Social Services (IBESR) has noted that since LFBS began this initiative, the number of

children living on the streets has been drastically reduced.

This year, we were also able to complete medical evaluations for all of the children in the local prison. LFBS then successfully advocated for those needing immediate medical intervention, and provided one boy with badly needed surgery. We also supported several youth, who were previously in conflict with the law, to participate in construction apprenticeships.

Together with local authorities involved with Child Protection, such as members of the judicial system, local police and social services, LFBS hosted a workshop in which we discussed the issue of children in conflict with the law and street children at risk: what are the causes and what are possible interventions or solutions? As a result we began to develop a collaborative action plan.



4. COVID-19 PREVENTION

COVID-19 reached Haiti in March 2020. In Haiti, social distancing is not an option for most families, and the health care system doesn't have the capacity to react to a pandemic. The LFBS team immediately took preventative measures by providing supplies and information to vulnerable families. We implemented hand-washing stations, provided masks and hand sanitizers to staff members as well as beneficiaries, and adjusted our schedules and activities.

We stopped receiving children in our Transitional Safehouses for a period of time; we varied our staff schedules; and we focused on emergency situations. For families living in rural communities, we provided hand-washing stations and sanitation supplies. Our nurse was part of the Outreach team

working with vulnerable families and, as we distributed the sanitation supplies, she did training sessions for COVID-19 prevention. While taking precautions and helping children and their parents to do the same, we also focused on assisting vulnerable families with food security. For many families this meant helping reinforce their agricultural initiatives, and for others it meant providing emergency nutritional assistance.

Although schools were initially closed due to COVID-19, we ensured that tutoring, English lessons and other educational activities were still able to proceed by employing some University students to work with small groups of children and youth.

5. INTERNAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

During 2020 we focused on restructuring the way the LFBS operations unfold, reinforcing the capacity of our local staff, and further strengthening our programs and services. These modifications began when COVID-19 impacted our normal work schedule and operations, allowing us to pivot our time use internally.

In April 2020 we decided to begin using 2 to 3 days each week to focus on staff training and customized, participative workshops. Training sessions provided to staff included Child Development, Case Management, Human Rights, Justice of Minors, Psycho-Social Support of Children, as well as CPR and Fire Safety. Workshops included an evaluation of each LFBS program's strengths and weaknesses, and then working to address them one by one. As a result of those workshops and our operational review, we began to implement a series of changes ensuring that the way that we function continues to evolve professionally and empowers

our staff to become more autonomous in their work. We have implemented changes in our reporting structure, staff responsibilities and the documentation of our work.



Our Vision

We believe that children belong in safe, loving and self-sustaining families.

Little Footprints, Big Steps strives to protect vulnerable children in Haiti by reuniting families and empowering them with resources and opportunities to build a self-sufficient future. By reinforcing their family unit, we strive to foster the health, self-worth and social reintegration of children who have been mistreated. We respect and value Haitian autonomy by working with local staff, authorities and partners.

Our Mission

LFBS empowers vulnerable families that have been separated, or who are at risk of separation, by supporting local protection authorities in building a stronger child protection network. LFBS works to keep families together by addressing the root causes of separation and poverty through programming in child well-being and development, family and community development, advocacy of child rights, and medical outreach.

WHAT WE DO

We support vulnerable children and youth to regain their physical and mental health, to access educational opportunities, and to reconnect with their families. We empower families toward a future of dignity and self-sufficiency. We reinforce the child protection and deinstitutionalization efforts of Haitian authorities.

WHY WE DO IT

Over 80% of children in orphanages have living families. They are “poverty orphans”, separated because their families can’t afford to care for them. Over 750 orphanages exist in Haiti – most of which are “for-profit” businesses, exploiting children in order to receive foreign aid. Only 4.6% of those orphanages meet the minimum standards of care according to the Haitian government.

Children raised in institutions are 6 times more likely to be a victim of violence and 500 times more likely to commit suicide (compared to children raised in families). Children should not be separated from their families due to poverty.

Children living in corrupt orphanages, the streets, or the restavec (modern slavery) system are all easily exploited because they have been separated from their families. However – when children are separated from their families, there is a reason for it. To truly change these children’s lives we must not only reunite them with their families, but also address the issue that caused separation in the first place. This is why following up with family mediation and strengthening, while facilitating preventative efforts in vulnerable communities, is so important.

HOW WE DO IT

The secret to our work is the passion and dedication of our staff. Our team of local employees continually receive training to reinforce their capacity, yet their personal investment in our work is what makes the impossible possible. We work very closely with local Haitian authorities such as Haitian Social Services (IBESR), the Child Protection Brigade of the local police (BPM), and the Ministry of Women’s Rights (MCFDF).

Our main focus is on family reunification of children who have been separated from their families. This includes children living in corrupt orphanages, children living in the streets, restavecs (modern slaves), victims of sexual assault, lost and abandoned children. When referred by local authorities, we receive these children in our Transitional Safehouses while their families are being traced or a long term placement (such as a foster family) is being prepared. During their temporary stay in our Transitional Safehouses, children receive nutritious meals, medical care, counseling, literacy tutoring, life skills training, and a safe space.

Once children have been reunited with their families, we continue to follow up with them. We provide access to education, vocational skills, small businesses, agricultural development, and medical care for vulnerable families in order to empower them to care for their children, and to ensure their children have the opportunity for a brighter future.

Together with local authorities, we facilitate community training for the prevention of violence and exploitation. We work alongside community leaders to ensure those workshops have a long lasting impact. We raise awareness globally about the value and effectiveness of deinstitutionalization, and the importance of ensuring that international aid truly helps – not harms – children.

WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT

We have lengthy, strong and respected relationships with the people, families, communities and partners we work with. Our team is deeply invested in our work. Our staff are Haitian, led by our Cofounder/Head of Haiti Operations who lives and works alongside them. We work closely alongside local authorities such as Haitian Social Services and the Child Protection Brigade of the local police and support their initiatives. Our programs have a vast geographical reach as we follow up with families wherever they’ve been reunited - which has brought us to over 25 different communities across Haiti. We continually strive to improve and better serve the Haitian community – which means we are continually learning from our beneficiaries, as they are the experts on their own needs. Our intervention for each child is personalized, based on their own situation, needs and dreams. Our focus is being a catalyst for sustained change.



Our Programs and Services Focus on:

1. CHILD WELL-BEING AND DEVELOPMENT

We focus on physical and emotional well-being of vulnerable children and youth while providing them with access to education, including vocational learning opportunities. Our transitional safehouses provide protection and healing for children who are separated from their families and in need of temporary placement before being reunited. This is key in reinforcing the capacity of local authorities to react when children are in dangerous situations.

2. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Our outreach programs help empower vulnerable families by providing the training and resources they need to preserve the family unit. This may include assistance with family mediation, medical care, access to safe housing, and development of income generating activities such as agriculture or small businesses. Empowering families strengthens communities.

3. ADVOCACY OF CHILD RIGHTS

In collaboration with Haitian authorities we raise awareness against child abuse and abandonment. We work to protect and empower victims of abuse and exploitation, changing Haiti's child protection landscape and advocating globally.

4. MEDICAL OUTREACH

Vulnerable children who cannot afford medical care are either identified when our staff visit a local hospital or through a referral from local authorities. This helps to prevent abandonment and separation by providing care to families who cannot afford care themselves



Our Results

LFBS has worked with over thousands of beneficiaries since our conception in 2011. Of the children we have received in our transitional safehouses, some were previously in orphanages, or were previously living on the streets, had been abandoned or lost, or were former restavecs. During their temporary placement in our safehouses, the children were provided with psychosocial and medical support, education, and vocational learning opportunities while LFBS and local Haitian authorities identified a path toward reunification.

Over 350 families are holistically receiving support from our programs in their communities. Through our advocacy and child rights programming we work to raise awareness globally about child protection issues in Haiti and how to better facilitate aid. We raise awareness and facilitate community training in the prevention of violence and separation, and provide medical, legal, and psychological support for sexual assault victims. We provide legal support for victims of human rights violations, support local authorities vision for deinstitutionalization, and help provide legal documents for children who don't have them so that they can obtain birth certificates and other government ID.

Our medical outreach programming provides emergency interventions, operations, basic medical care and nutritional support. Thousands of children have received medical attention and care either during our mobile medical clinics or after being identified in local hospital.

To date, we have had 142 participants in our business start-up initiatives. Our family and community development programming provides training and resources that vulnerable families need to preserve the family unit through services and initiatives such as housing, family mediation, medical support for family members, and agronomy.



Meet Eluxon ...Child and Youth Mentor



“I don’t worry about my past because I have the present and the future.”

— Eluxon, LFBS Child and Youth Mentor

Eluxon spent 12 years living in a neglectful and exploitative orphanage. For several of those years, he was sent to work for a host family as a restavec (in domestic labour). He has not only experienced first hand the changes in his own life and personal development after leaving that orphanage, but has witnessed the transformation of his friends’ lives once they left the orphanage as well. Eluxon understands the purpose of LFBS on the deepest level: he’s lived it. He’s experienced the mistreatment we want to protect children from; and he’s experienced the changes we strive to create for those children.

Eluxon now works as our Child and Youth Mentor. He provides orientation and guidance for children passing through our Boys’ Transitional Safehouse, teaching them about their rights and providing a listening ear. He helps the children overcome what they’ve been through, helps address issues in their behavior or health, and helps reconnect them with their families. Eluxon is passionate about all aspects of LFBS work, but in particular about empowering youth to become more self-sufficient. He believes in the potential of the youth we work with. Eluxon also helps facilitate training in schools and communities to educate youth about their rights. The insight Eluxon has gained through his personal experiences and level of reflection are invaluable.

Financials

Ensuring that expenditures are focused on children, families and key objectives is integral to the work and values of LFBS.

We are a Registered Canadian Charity under the Canadian Income Tax Act with CRA #84792 2101 RR0001 and in the United States as a 501(c)(3) 981224282.

Every dollar is accounted for and works toward making a difference – now and into the future. Our detailed expenditure reports are available upon request.

*Land Development Project donations and expenses are separated from funding for our programs and operations. Donations to our programs and services are not used for the land development project.

Fiscal Year Expenditures:

November 1, 2019 to October 31, 2020

EDUCATION:

\$57,604

Includes tuition, uniforms, books, supplies, tutoring, vocational skills and staff training.

OPERATION OF SAFEHOUSES:

\$75,956

Includes food/water, rent, staff wages, maintenance, medical/dental, furnishings, clothing, recreational activities for children while in our Transitional Safehouses.

OUTREACH & COMMUNITY:

\$207,954

Includes transportation, housing support, staff wages, medical/dental, community education/ training, communications, agriculture and Business Startup Program.

ADMINISTRATION:

\$72,810

Includes Haiti office expenses and supplies, banking/exchange fees, accounting, shipping, legal fees and staff wages.

*LFBS LAND/BLDG DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

\$229,585

Ensuring an efficient, sustainable future, we are building a permanent home for our offices, medical consultation clinic and Transitional Safehouses. We also use the land to produce food crops for use in our Transitional Safehouses and for distribution to vulnerable families. Funding for this work is separate from funding for LFBS programs and operations. General donations are not used toward the land development project, only those donations made specifically for construction will be used as such.





To our cherished donors, sponsors and supporters.

Thank you, to each and everyone of you.

FOR being such generous and consistent catalysts for real change.

FOR hosting and attending fundraising events.

FOR sharing information about our work.

FOR following us on social media.

FOR being part of our team, mobilizing children, youth and families toward a life of dignity and self sufficiency.

FOR caring.

Moving Forward

Our focus on internal development will continue as we build the capacity of our dedicated team of local staff while increasing the documentation and structure of our programs. We will continually strive to improve our work and ensure that we are empowering the families we support. By helping them in a sustainable way, eventually they shouldn't need us anymore! We will not only provide families with agricultural support or business start up, and youth with vocational training, but will also accompany them to ensure this support makes a sustainable difference in their lives. Finally, we will continue reinforcing the deinstitutionalization efforts of local child protection authorities such as IBESR, while raising awareness both in Haiti and internationally about the importance of keeping families together.

We are in the midst of some exciting changes in our governance. We welcomed three new additions to our

Board of Directors in 2020, Danielle Sparks, Lisa Maenpaa, and Tara MacDougall.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Karen Wienberg, Emma Siemiatycki, and Pam Hine for their incredible contributions to our Board of Directors. We sincerely thank them for their leadership in their time with LFBS. The Board wishes them the best of luck and opportunities in their future endeavours.

Sarah Martin, LFBS co-founder, will be filling the role of Interim Board Chair. We are excited to be moving forward under her leadership in 2021.



YOU make the difference.
YOU can be a catalyst.

Donate:

\$20	<i>shoes</i>
\$40/mt	<i>tutoring</i>
\$60	<i>hospital visit</i>
\$100	<i>agriculture kit</i>
\$130	<i>livestock</i>
\$200 - \$300	<i>business start-up</i>
\$250 - \$500	<i>school tuition</i>

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